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# Half-Forgotten Romances of American History

by

ELISABETH ELLICOTT POE

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Half-Forgotten Romances  
*of*  
American History

By  
ELISABETH ELLICOTT POE

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*To Mrs. Clarence Crittenden Calhoun.*

*This little sheaf of tales from the treasure house of American History I inscribe to you as the earnest of my friendship.*

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## CHAPTER 1

### The Lady Pocahontas and Captain John Smith

IT WAS winter in Virginia, A. D. 1607. Gone were the Italian blue skies of the spring and summer which had charmed the Jamestown settlers when the ships *God-speed*, *Susan Constant* and the *Discovery* sailed up the Powhatan River, rechristened by the voyagers the "James" in honor of the King of England. The dogwood, wild cherry, crab apple, mulberry and persimmon trees had lost their blooms, but here and there through grim, white woods gleamed the red of the holly tree. On giant oaks clustered the white berry of the mistletoe, a strange reminder to the Englishmen of the Druid faith of their forefathers.

In the Indian village, Werowocomoco, on the York River, lived the mighty Powhatan, chief of the region. The village was situated about three miles above the present Yorktown, where the lion of England surrendered in later years to the lion's cub, America. It was one of three capital villages of the Powhatan confederation of Indians. The others were Orapakes, on the Chickahominy River, near Powhatan, and Powhatan, near the present site of the city of Richmond.

Werowocomoco was composed of 25 or 30 wigwams or houses built of saplings. These were planted at regular distances like posts, then bent over and tied together in the middle. The houses were built up by skillful application of barks and grasses adroitly interwoven. Their shape was either oblong or circular. Sixty stalwart warriors guarded the sacred person of Powhatan. Powhatan's domestic relations are quaintly put: "He had a multiplicity of women." It is apparent that Powhatan, in common with other royalties, followed King Solomon's practical advice and brought upon himself marital trouble by adding rather than reducing possibilities in the number of wives. Powhatan, however, had one kingly prerogative lesser mortals lack in these more progressive days. If he tired of a wife, he gave her away to a friend as a token of royal favor. Such an improvement on the modern divorce court!

T. R. would have rejoiced in Powhatan's family. He had twenty sons and twelve daughters. The light of his eyes was the Princess Matoaka, his twelve-year-old

daughter, in the vernacular "Pocahontas." This name meant "a bright stream between two hills."

With his long feather quill, a Jamestown author quaintly describes the Lady Pocahontas: "A little girl wrapped in a robe of doeskin, lined and edged with pigeon down, a white heron feather in her black hair, a forest maid truly, but royal every inch of her."

Pocahontas was a merry child, the playmate of her numerous brothers, most unusual in Indian households. She was fond of boyish sports—a Nimrod unsurpassed. Acquainted with every inch of the deep forests, which surrounded the capital villages, she roamed carefree through them. She passed the months going from one capital to another with her father. Powhatan was regal in the extreme, and believed in keeping up all the trappings of royalty, so these migrations of the forest courts were pageants to her childish eyes.

As yet romance had passed her by. She was content with childish games. She dreamed not of a world beyond the seas nor that in years to come she was to write her name imperishably on the pages of American history as the "Savior of Jamestown." No hint of this high destiny came to her as she played with her brothers in the royal courtyards of mighty Powhatan's "palaces." Her horizon was bordered by the edges of the mighty forests peopled by enemy tribesmen and the imps and devils of her crude religion. To her primitive mind, all men and women were copper hued like the stalwarts of her race.

Only dimly did she visualize a world that lay beyond the great waters. A few months before, a tale had come of a strange race of seafarers, storm driven into one of the lower islands on the Powhatan River. These wanderers had set up strange altars. They were palefaced, "whiter than the winter's snow," according to the tales. All the Indian world was agog with news of them and filled with a vague uneasiness and fear.

Powhatan had not been idle. His scouts had investigated the invasion of his territory. He consulted many anxious hours with his medicine men and other advisers. Undecided as to what course to pursue, he was biding his time. The gossip of the villages reached the royal wigwams and Pocahontas was fired with the vivid tales of the scouts anent the wonders of the white strangers.

While peacefully playing with her boy chums one day, a shout rang through the village. A tribal canoe was coming up the river. Its warriors had a captive "pale-face." The Indian boys and Pocahontas ran to the

water's edge, as eager children will the world over to see a curious sight or person. As the canoe was beached, Pocahontas looked across the intervening waters into the face of Capt. John Smith. She became a woman at the sight of this gallant soldier of fortune—yea, doomed to love and to love in vain and at last to die broken-hearted in a strange land because her love was not returned.

The pale face at whom she looked was one of the brave, pioneer spirits of the island kingdom engaging in extending the boundaries of King James I, then on the throne of England, and incidentally winning fame, renown and riches for themselves—if all went well. Smith had had a romantic career; he had adventured in many lands and under many captains, fought with the Germans against the Turks, was captured by them and held as a slave in Constantinople. On his return to England he heard the tales of the wondrous virgin country overseas and followed the footsteps of Raleigh and Gilbert. The English flag had been planted in America by the intrepid Raleigh and other members of the Roanoke colony—that famed lost settlement that preceded Jamestown and whose brief existence was signalized by the birth of Virginia Dare, the first white child born here.

Smith stood upright in the canoe with hands bound behind him. He was in the thirtieth year of his life, attractive enough to interest any woman—Indian or otherwise. He wore, besides a dashing cavalier mustache, a full beard, his dark hair was long and curly and the high cavalier ruff of Elizabethan days and the soldier's waistcoat of chained steel and dark but rich courtier dress set off his manly beauty to great advantage. His brown eyes gleamed with courage and fearlessness and he looked with deep interest on the group of savage children and the king's bodyguard watching his approach.

History doth not record it and even romantic imagination cannot picture Pocahontas as attracting his attention particularly at that time. The natives were all alike to him. In the months the Jamestown colony had been established Smith had gained some insight into Indian nature. His thoughts at this juncture were probably those of escape. Women were far from his thoughts. His experiences in what is now called the Near East had given him preconceived views of "pagans." The forest people were simply pawns in the game of empire Smith was playing for his king. The human side of the savages meant little or nothing to him.

John Smith was not particularly well educated. Yet his

learning was sufficient for the time. He could read and write, which feat was more than others of the king's gallants could boast. Such religion as he possessed was of the soldier type—something to be fought for, but for women to actually practice. This was the man to whom the simple, child heart of Pocahontas went out as she looked on him in captivity that winter's day more than 300 years ago. Being a woman she pitied him as she gazed, and being a king's daughter she knew that death might mark the end of his captivity.

Powhatan's brother and Vassal Chieftain, Opechancanough, had captured Smith, when in order to satisfy the complaints of the colonists, still eager for a quick passage to the East Indies, he had sailed up the Chickahominy river, hoping to discover a passage to the south seas or the Pacific ocean. He would have been put to instant death upon capture but for the fact that he entertained the wily savage by his compass. The old chief was enthralled by the wonder which pointed always to the North Star.

So he sent Smith to Powhatan under escort, leaving it to him to decide his fate.

It was an event to Powhatan and he received the pale-face in regal state. He was seated and 50 armed warriors surrounded him, and back of him stood a group of his wives. On the outskirts of the scene were Pocahontas and the other royal children.

It was one of the great moments of history. The principal figures, Powhatan and Capt. John Smith were well matched. Powhatan had a native shrewdness and sagacity which offset his lack of general education and knowledge of the great world outside his dominion. A historian of the period described the great chief by a few graphic strokes of his pen.

"A goodly old man," he wrote, "not yet shrinking, although well beaten with many strong and cold winters, supposed to be little less than 80 years old, with grey hairs, but plain and thin, except for his broad shoulders; some few hairs upon his chin and upper lip. He hath been a strong and able savage, sinewy and of a daring spirit; vigilant and ambitious, subtle to enlarge his dominions."

Powhatan was an absolute monarch. In him seemed to have been vested the legislative, judicial and executive branches of the government of the kingdom. In common with other kings of his own and later times, he managed to use a dummy council of wiseacres, consisting of grey beards of the tribes, to great advantage.

It was with these figureheads that Powhatan consulted after he greeted Smith and invited him to partake of the royal feast that had just been served. Powhatan did not share the Arab's dislike of plotting against the man who broke his bread. While Smith partook of the royal feast of turkey and venison, Powhatan planned the ways and means of his death.

Only one person in the assemblage who knew of Smith's danger cared as to the outcome. This was Pocahontas, who read Smith's death warrant in her father's crafty looks and the certain, grim, silent preparations that went on while the involuntary visitor's back was turned. She knew he was doomed. Her quick, feminine mind cast about for a means of saving him.

The unconscious Smith ate and drank with apparent unconcern, but he, too, was not easy in his mind. By this time he had learned some of the Indian ways. He felt all was not well. But he was powerless. He knew a break for liberty would be utter folly. His uncertainty did not continue long. At a sign from Powhatan two huge stones were brought in and placed in the center of the council room. Smith's hands, loosened for the meal, were rebound. A warrior, with a huge club, appeared. Smith thought his end had come, especially when his captors, with savage glee and much barbaric chanting, drew him to the stones, and he was forced to put his head upon the rude block. Looking up for a moment he saw above him the club uplifted, ready for the signal from Powhatan.

Just as it was about to be given there was a flash of color. A lithe figure sprang across the council ground, threw her arms around Smith and protected him with her strong young body from the threatened death blow. She was exercising one of the ancient rights of the royal princesses of her tribe, saving a prisoner by personal appeal.

Powhatan sprang up aghast. Pocahontas, unafraid, threw herself on the ground before him and begged for the life of the white man. Powhatan was reluctant to give up his prey. He finally yielded to the entreaties of his darling daughter and turned Smith over to her as a servant. However, Pocahontas did not keep the fascinating Smith long in this status. The little princess soon sent him back to Jamestown with a guard and her best wishes. For many weeks the memory of her goodness proved a bond between her people and the whites. Amicable relations existed between her people and the little band of Englishmen sheltered on Jamestown island.



She did not forget the visitor from the land of the pale-face. Her eyes had seen beyond the horizon of her native woods. No more could she content herself with the rough games of the camp fires and the innocent childish amusements of a few weeks before. It was the way of womankind she was traveling now. Though it was rough with the thorns of sacrifice and suffering yet on its banks blossomed the wild rose and the first sweet flowers of the spring.

Pocahontas soon followed the path through the woods to Jamestown where she was royally received, especially as she came bearing shy gifts of needed supplies and food for the starving settlers. Without the firm but effective hand of Smith on the helm of affairs at Jamestown during his fateful trip up the Chickahominy, affairs had gone from bad to worse in the little colony. When Smith returned he found confusion and turmoil. A number of settlers had died of starvation and the rest were dangerously near its brink.

The first hunger was satisfied by the generous gifts of Pocahontas given to Smith on his departure. After that she was the colony's good fairy for months. She came and went freely among the colonists, a pretty sight in her doeskin robes—accompanied by shy brothers—and a guard of warriors whose dark, unfriendly faces brought shudders even to the watching colonists. Yet the gentle Lady Pocahontas was the friend of every man, woman and child in the settlement, and all loved this maid of the woods.

Capt. John Smith, her released captive, was her hero nevertheless. She saw him leading the colony on to success—he was a born leader—and women ever admire achievement. She watched with shy intentness the progress of her friend. On his part, according to all the near and jealous eyes that spied upon his every movement, there never seems to have been more than a friendly, grateful interest in Powhatan's daughter. She had rescued him from death. For this he was profoundly thankful and appreciative.

But the idea of romance between them probably never entered his head. She was a savage, he a Christian. In his mind between the two yawned a great gulf—over which he would not attempt to pass. Besides, he was intent on bringing the colony to success on the one hand and fighting his active enemies on the other. In addition, two other foes stalked outside the palisades, the grim terror, famine, and the red peril lurking in the unfathomable woods.



Yet John Smith was gentleness itself to little Pocahontas. He taught her how to be civilized. She sat by him hour after hour and watched him govern, drank in his tales of adventure and heard his plans for the building of his part of the great empire beyond the seas. Naturally gifted with a quick and active mind, Pocahontas rapidly absorbed the ways of the whites. And, such is the woman heart, even at such an early age, with the advanced maturity of warm climates, her childish fancy ripened into passionate woman love. The distance between their lives was as nothing to her. Was she not a princess?

John Smith, judging from history, pursued the even tenor of his ways undisturbed by any woman, even the red-skinned princess, who waited by his side for words of love. To her he could give all possible kindness and friendship, but never a thought of love. He had her taught English. On the other hand he gained from her a thorough knowledge of the signs and symbols of her tribal tongue.

Pocahontas was true to her English friends, but not so her father. Powhatan and his wily tribesmen were determined that the struggling little colony should not survive. Plot after plot were launched; settlers who wandered far in the woods were mysteriously slain and stray arrows had a curious fashion of finding themselves in pioneer British hearts.

King James of England, who preached the divine rights of kings so valiantly, was consistent in his viewpoint and insisted that Powhatan was his royal brother. He sent a crown and other gifts to Powhatan in token of his high regard and ordered that Powhatan be brought to Jamestown for the ceremonies of coronation. This was easier said than done. Doughty Smith found that out when he tried to carry out the royal mandate.

Powhatan was a king, too, and knew his rights. "This is my land," he told Smith, "and I also am a king. If your king has sent me presents eight days will I remain at Werocomoco to receive them. Your father (meaning Captain Newport, the custodian of the royal gifts) must come to me, not I to him."

So, as old King Powhatan would not go to the mountain, the mountain had to come to him. Captain Newport therefore came to Werocomoco within the appointed eight days bearing the presents from King James. It took a long time to persuade Powhatan to put on the scarlet trappings of State. Finally he did. When he was ordered to kneel down to be crowned the haughty old forest monarch

blankly refused. However, by bearing hard on his head while he stooped a little they managed to crown him. A salute was fired which so startled Powhatan he quite lost his temper and retired, like Achilles, to sulk in his tent. Capt. Smith and his followers went back to Jamestown worn out by the task of making a king "more a king."

A short time after, Powhatan again planned the death of Capt. John Smith. Pocahontas, "his dearest jewel and daughter," once more foiled him.

It was the winter of 1608. The Jamestown colony was starving and Smith took some companions and went hunting. He also accepted an invitation from Powhatan, well aware of the condition of the colony, to come to Werocomoco. There he promised if Smith would build him a house, give him a grindstone, fifty swords, some firearms, a hen and a rooster and much beads and copper, Powhatan would reciprocate with supplies of corn. Smith gladly accepted. He had a plan of his own to kidnap the crafty old chief and hold him for a good ransom and thus save the colony.

Powhatan had also been doing some thinking. He knew either his people or the English must go. He was determined to exterminate the colony. To his mind, the first man to go was the real leader—Capt. John Smith.

On the 12th of January the party of English reached Werocomoco. Several passages, verbal and otherwise, took place between Smith and Powhatan, each looking for an opening where a real hold could be gotten.

Powhatan sent over a great feast of venison, turkey and corn. The half-starved men delightedly started to prepare it. A group of savages drew near, seemingly friendly and engaging in rough sports, apparently amusing the whites. Suddenly Pocahontas appeared in the door of their cabin. She had come through the dark and cold night, unattended, from her father's palace.

She told the English that Powhatan had provided this great feast but had conspired to come suddenly upon them preoccupied with the feast and destroy them. Pocahontas begged them to leave. Captain Smith, grateful for this brave and timely warning, pressed some gifts upon the Indian princess, things that must have greatly delighted her childish heart. But she said, with tears in her eyes:

"I dare not to be seen to have any, for if Powhatan should know it I am but dead." With a last shy goodbye she ran into the woods and disappeared. That was Smith's last glimpse of her in the New World. They only met once more in England when she had become the bride of another.

The savages came, bearing great platters of food, even as Pocahontas had foretold. They begged the Englishmen to put out the matches of their guns, as the smoke made them very sick, and to sit down and eat their suppers. The English refused, and sent for Powhatan. But he would not come, and with the coming of high tide, the party left for Jamestown. On the way home the Pamunkey and the Mataponi Indians supplied them with 479 bushels of corn and 200 pounds of deer suet.

Undoubtedly, but for the timely warning of Pocahontas, Smith would have been seized and put to death at Werocomoco.

On his return to Jamestown, Smith finally consented to succeed Ratcliffe, who had been deposed by the colonists. He only held office a few months, however, as he was severely wounded by an explosion of gun powder on one of his expeditions. A vessel arriving from England opportunely, Smith turned over the reins of government to George Percy, the brother of the Earl of Northumberland, and departed for England. It was an evil day for the colony. Hardly had his ship disappeared over the horizon when the bickering and internal strife began again.

Little Pocahontas paid the price of her interference. The mighty Powhatan, foiled of his prey, sulked constantly. Life was unbearable for his wives and children. Rumors had reached his ears that Pocahontas had betrayed his conspiracy to Smith. He made her life so wretched that she left home in order to escape his incessant anger and took refuge with the Potomac Indians, friends of hers. In the wigwam of one Japazaws, Pocahontas was made welcome by the women of the household. She remained for several years. The settlers at Jamestown missed her visits. No news came of her, and there seems to have been a silence of many months between the settlers and their little Indian friend.

Early in 1612, Argall was sent out by Governor Dale in search of provisions. Among the Indians he visited was the Potomac tribe, and there he found Pocahontas. The frightened girl finally admitted her identity and Argall conceived the plan of kidnaping her and holding her as hostage in order to bring Powhatan to terms.

Ralph Hamor, secretary to the Jamestown colony, has left in his quaint phraseology, a picturesque description of the kidnaping of Pocahontas.

Mr. Hamor does not excuse the deception that was practised on Pocahontas in order to get her into the hands of the English.

He says Captain Argall dealt with the crafty Japazaws and offered him the bribe of a copper kettle for himself and wife, if they would assist in the capture of Pocahontas. A copper kettle was evidently the price of the precious pair, for they drove the bargain.

The question was how to get Pocahontas aboard the English ship. She shunned it, as if fearing danger. Mrs. Japazaws took a hand in the game. She pretended to be overcome with a desire to visit the English ship and, according to her instructions, Japazaws strictly forbade it.

That was enough for Pocahontas. Her sympathies were immediately with the tyrannized wife and, womanlike, she entreated the Indian chief to permit his wife to go aboard, promising to go with her. Hamor in speaking of this says quaintly, "Japazaws thus wrought it, making his wife an instrument (which hath ever been most powerful in beguiling enticements) to effect the plot which he had thus laid. He agreed that himself, his wife and Pocahontas would accompany his wife to the waterside. When there his wife was to feign tears (as who knows not that woman can command tears) whereupon her husband, seeming to pity those tears, gave her leave to go aboard so that it would please Pocahontas to accompany her."

Once aboard, a supper was served after which the news was broken to Pocahontas that she was a captive. Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Japazaws went their way rejoicing—richer by one copper kettle. Pocahontas was reassured by Argall, who promised her every protection and liberty when her father yielded. He persuaded her that her temporary hardship would work permanent peace between the Indians and the English. This greatly pleased her, but not so the news, so the story goes, that Capt. John Smith was dead.

Poor Pocahontas was overwhelmed with grief. Her English was so slight she could not gather the truth, and she languished in captivity. Envoys with white flags went to Powhatan to tell him the English held his darling daughter, "the Nonparella of Virginia," as Hamor picturesquely calls her. The ultimatum was that if he would send home the Englishmen he held in captivity, the tools and arms his people had stolen, and a certain supply of corn, Pocahontas would be restored to his arms.

Powhatan was in a quandary. He loved his daughter, indeed, almost as much as his life. Yet the English weapons were very alluring and very bright to his savage eyes. It took Powhatan three months to decide even to listen to the proposals; then he tried to temporize and

sent back seven Englishmen, three muskets, one broad ax, a whip saw and a canoe full of corn. With this was the message that when he got his daughter the rest of the requisition would follow.

The English were not to be caught so easily. Back went the word to old Powhatan, "Your daughter shall be well used, but we cannot believe that the rest of our arms were either lost or stolen from you. Therefore until you send them we will keep your daughter."

Powhatan was infuriated. His scouts had told him Pocahontas was in no bodily danger, so he did not fear for her. He retired to his wigwam and sulked, and sulked, and sulked.

Finally Governor Dale, who wanted the corn and his men more than he did to annoy Powhatan, took Pocahontas and 150 men, in the vessels of the colony, and went on a visit to Powhatan. The Indian chief refused to see him. Dale sent word that he wished to send Pocahontas to her father's loving arms. In vain they argued; Powhatan would have none of it. They had to return to Jamestown with Lady Pocahontas—and minus the corn.

Pocahontas remained a nominal prisoner at Jamestown for about a year. She was treated with marked consideration and kindness by all. She always entertained the warmest feeling for the English settlers, and her life of imprisonment was by no means one of hardship. Now a woman 18 years old, Pocahontas was beautiful and gentle.

Captain Smith was in England, but there was another man, a kindly widower, "an honest gentleman of good behavior in the Jamestown Colony who liked the Lady Pocahontas." His name was John Rolfe.

Rolfe displayed great concern as to the conversion of Pocahontas and sought to convert her to Christianity. While he was in the prosecution of this most worthy purpose, he conceived the idea of marrying the Indian maiden. Soon, from all appearances, he became very much in love with her.

However, some historians have felt that Mr. Rolfe was more enamored of marrying a king's daughter, even a dusky princess, than he was of getting a new bride. He also thought that it might win him preference as to leadership in America. At any rate, Rolfe wrote a letter to Sir Thomas Dale asking his advice about marrying the maiden. Sir Thomas, delighted, gave his consent. Nobody thought of asking poor old Powhatan much about it, until Pocahontas sent word by one of her brothers.

Powhatan was greatly delighted, strange as it may seem.



He sent an old uncle and two brothers to Jamestown to attend the wedding ceremonies. Rolfe did not like the idea of marrying a heathen, so Pocahontas was baptized into the Christian communion before the marriage ceremony in a historic scene that has been immortalized in a number of notable paintings. In her christening Pocahontas was called Rebecca, and because she was a king's daughter she was entitled to be known as the Lady Rebecca.

After the marriage of Pocahontas and Mr. Rolfe they went to live at Rolfe's home, Varina, in one of the new settlements along the James River known as Bermuda Hundred. Here lived Mr. Whitaker, the pastor of the colony, and also Sir Thomas Dale, who preferred country life rather than Jamestown.

At Varina her little son, Thomas Rolfe, was born. In 1616 Sir Thomas Dale went back to England, taking with him Mr. Rolfe, his Indian princess wife and child, and an escort of Indians of both sexes. Their arrival caused the greatest excitement in England. From the court down, everyone was anxious to see the "redskins," and Pocahontas was accorded almost royal honors. Indeed, Thomas Rolfe was for a time in grave danger of a reprimand from the throne for his daring in taking a member of a royal family—he a mere commoner—to wife.

Pocahontas in the midst of all the entertaining was not happy. Gone were her native woods, and she felt strange and alone in the new land. Then, too, she had learned that she had been deceived regarding Capt. John Smith—he was not dead.

It seems that Smith was somewhat delayed in seeing Pocahontas. But he told Queen Anne the virtues of Pocahontas and her services to him and to the English colony and for the first time related the story of his rescue from death by Pocahontas.

When Captain Smith at last met Pocahontas the formality of his conduct greatly distressed her. She said to him:

"You did promise Powhatan what was yours should be his and he the like to you. You called him 'father,' being in his land a stranger, and for the same reason so must I do to you." Smith protested, and explained that in England their relations could not be as they had been in America, and that he "Durst not allow that title, because she was regarded as a king's daughter."

"Were you not afraid," said Pocahontas, "to come into my father's country and cause fear in him and all his people but me, and fear you here I should call you father?"

I tell you then that I will, and you shall call me child, and so I shall be forever and ever your countryman." Then she concluded, with her eyes brimming over with tears, "they did tell us always you were dead, and I knew no other until I came to Plymouth."

That was the sad end of the romance and Captain Smith left soon for the continent. With his departure, the Indian princess turned her face to the sea and died of homesickness and mayhaps unrequited affection. Officially her death was registered as "galloping consumption." She died on the eve of her return to America. Captain Smith wrote in his epitaph of her: "It pleased God at Gravesend to take this young lady to his mercy, where she made not more sorrow for her unexpected death than joy to the beholders to hear and see her make so religious and godly an end."

Her child, Thomas Rolfe, was left in England, where he was educated. He returned to America afterwards. From him are descended some of the leading families of Virginia—the Murrays, Flemings, Gays, Whittles, Robertsons, Bollings and Eldridges, as well as that branch of Randolphs to which the famous John Randolph, of Roanoke, belonged.

Mrs. Sigourney wrote of Pocahontas in these beautiful lines:

The council fires are quenched that erst so red  
Their midnight volume mid the groves entwined.  
King, stately chief, warrior host are dead,  
Nor remnant nor memory left behind.  
But thou, O forest princess, true of heart  
When o'er our fathers waved destruction's dart,  
Shalt in their children's loving hearts be shrined;  
Pure, lovely star o'er oblivion's wave,  
It is not meet thy name should moulder in the grave.

## CHAPTER 2

### Priscilla Mullins and John Alden

*But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent language,  
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,  
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrunning  
with laughter,  
Said, in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak for  
yourself, John?"*

—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

EVERY school child that arrives at the dignity of fifth-grade work has heard the romantic story of Priscilla and John Alden. Yet only in bare outlines is this dramatic episode recited although it remains the most notable contribution of the Pilgrim to the collection of New World love stories, as it were.

The word "Pilgrim" has the immediate reaction of austerity, cold, unimpassioned life. But this was not true. Beneath the drab coat of the Pilgrim burned a living fire of fidelity and constancy, of devotion to the ideal woman and longing for home life. This longing to establish good homes was the primal reason for the Pilgrims leaving Holland and braving the dangers overseas. In fact, the very repression of Pilgrim lives, set apart as they were, to live to die, made their love episodes more intense. Under the gray skies of New England love blossomed in those pioneer days, just as it did beneath the smiling blue of fair Virginia, their neighbor to the south.

A striking feature of the Priscilla and John Alden story is that it presents the first instance of the triangle romance in American history. It was an innocent triangle, and self-sacrifice and abnegation featured it. But the eternal triangle element was there—two men and one woman, both of whom loved her dearly, but, woman-like, she loved one only, and when in his stupidity the lucky man did not recognize her love she took her leap year advantage—1620—and told him so.

The perversity which guides a woman in love matters was evident in Priscilla Alden's choice. John Alden was a stalwart youth, and made her a good husband. She saw heaven in his blue eyes, beyond doubt, but for



most women the valiant soldier of fortune, Capt. Miles Standish, would have had more appeal. Standish was surrounded with the halo of romance and adventure in a dozen countries; he was strangely like that other doughty adventurer of America's beginnings, Capt. John Smith—a stout heart his, and fitted thereby for the stern tasks that awaited these Pilgrim folk, who sought on the bleak New England coast the right to accept the dictates of their own conscience and "freedom to worship God."

Perhaps Priscilla felt that to men of such type women are more or less "incidents," proving the poet Byron's confession that "Love is to man's life a thing apart. 'Tis woman's whole existence."

Perhaps she had the fear that in years to come Miles Standish might weary of the tameness of the Plymouth hearth fire and harken to the call of wanderlust once more. John Alden, on the other hand, was the steady-going kind, a student, of judicial temperament, imbued with the tenets of the Pilgrim faith, while Miles Standish as a soldier of the church militant was perhaps not overtroubled with religious theories and intricacies, a "fighting round head," so to speak, caring more for the battle than for the actual issues involved, a battling Puritan, like the fighting Quaker Ellicotts of Maryland, who have managed, in spite of being Friends, to be in every scrap in which Uncle Sam has had a hand.

The Indians of Cape Cod gave Capt. Miles Standish plenty of exercise for his broad sword and his blunderbusses, and he found a new thrill of battle in the Massachusetts woods that quite recompensed him for the loss of participation in some of the wars that were raging in Europe at the time.

It may come as a surprise to most people that the Pilgrim fathers were not "gray beards," as generally supposed, but, on the contrary, young men. Only two of the whole company were more than 50 years of age and only nine were more than 40. Standish was 36 years old; John Alden only 21. There again comes in another reason why John Alden was chosen by the sprightly Priscilla and Standish turned down by proxy. It was youth calling to youth with Priscilla and John Alden. To her 17-year-old eyes Captain Standish was an "old man."

John Alden was of her own generation. May preferred to wed with May instead of September, and there's no gainsaying a woman's "because," which in one word sums up any given action of hers.

Moreover, John Alden offered Priscilla the flower of a

first love; Miles Standish had buried his heart in a woman's grave—that of his first wife, lovely Rose Standish, frail of body but great of heart, who succumbed with fifteen of the twenty-nine women who had sailed from England and Holland to the hardships of the first Plymouth winter, leaving no child to comfort her sorrowing husband. All that remains to present times of Rose Standish is an embroidered lace cap, treasured by a descendant.

Rose Standish's death was the first that took place after the landing of the Pilgrims. The date was January 29, 1621, or less than six weeks after reaching Plymouth.

The romantic figure of Capt. Miles Standish looms large in the Pilgrim history. He was a man of parts, perhaps the most unique figure of all the Pilgrims. A gentleman born, he was one of the Lancashire Standishes, the same family that had John Standish, the quick-witted Englishman, the first to wound Wat Tyler after he had been felled by the lord mayor of London during his attempt on the person of the king. For this act of valor John Standish had been knighted and been given lands in reward. The family estate was Duxbury Hall, a fact that caused Capt. Miles Standish to give the name Duxbury to the Massachusetts town he founded and which it bears today.

The family could boast of a long and illustrious line of ancestors. In the great controversy between the Catholics and the Protestants there was a division in the family, part adhering to the ancient faith and part accepting the Protestant religion. The Protestants were the Standishes of Duxbury Hall. The income from the property for that date was very large, some \$500,000 a year.

It is said that Miles Standish was the legal heir of all this property, and that by gross injustice he was deprived of it. Recently a search was made of the records by the heirs of Miles Standish and it was found that he was the rightful heir of the property, but that the legal evidence had been fraudulently destroyed. Miles Standish was therefore compelled to seek his own fortune, and from various motives, which can be easily divined, he chose the profession of arms.

He was sent by her majesty Elizabeth to serve in the Netherlands in aid of the Dutch and Flemish against Philip II of Spain. He was quartered at Leyden, Holland, at the time Pastor John Robinson, with his Pilgrim church, settled there. Standish, although a member of the Church of England, soon formed warm friendships

among the Pilgrims, and when the Pilgrims emigrated he came with them, casting his sword and his fortunes, such as they were, in with their lot.

Captain Standish was, by common consent, put in charge of the military defenses of Plymouth. As there were only thirty-four adult male colonists, out of which Capt. Standish was free to choose, his "great invincible army of twelve men" was a tolerably accurate description. Standish, with this poor material, being the recognized military leader, developed qualities which have deservedly placed him high in the temple of fame.

But he was not only a military leader, for he came to have influence as a man of affairs and a counselor in civil matters. For many years he was one of the governors of the council. In 1626 he was sent by the colonists to England as their representative to adjust business matters with the merchant adventurers.

William Bradford, the wise, who was one of the *Mayflower* passengers, must have looked into the future and realized how in the centuries to come the descendants of the voyagers on that tiny vessel would be among the world's notables. For descent from those who came in the *Mayflower* has come to have ultra distinction. Some wag has written that it would have taken a whole fleet to carry back to England those whose descendants now claim voyaged over in the *Mayflower*. Be that as it may, there is no mystery about the name and station of the *Mayflower* passengers, for William Bradford wrote them in a round hand for all posterity to see upon the ship's list, together with descriptive matter concerning each passenger, which has proven a treasure trove to genealogists.

Of sturdy John Alden, the 21-year-old suitor for the hand of Priscilla Mullins, he wrote: "John Alden was hired for a cooper at Southampton, where the ship victualed, and, being a hopeful young man, was much desired, but left to his owne liking, to go or stay, when he came here, but stayd and maryed here." Longfellow has pictured John Alden in the new land as the friend, companion and lodger of Capt. Miles Standish, with whom he is said to have been on terms of the closest intimacy.

Other biographers of John Alden stated that he was the first to step ashore at Plymouth Rock. Longfellow in his description of Alden says he was fair haired, azure eyed, with delicate complexion—typically English, in other words—with that rare beauty of coloring that made St. Gregory pause in the market place at Rome and, viewing the captive Britons exposed for sale there,

exclaim, "Not Angles but angels." There is no doubt that John Alden was the youngest of the men who came in the *Mayflower*. He seems to have been an educated man as well as a cooper, an uncommon quality in that day, so there is a chance that John Alden assumed the role of cooper in order to become part of the Pilgrims' religious expeditionary forces, which excited much attention wherever the *Speedwell* or the *Mayflower* touched.

At any rate, he became in a sense the clerk of the colony after his arrival at Plymouth, especially in matters pertaining to the military. From the window from which Captain Standish gazed as he talked to his young companion could be seen the early grave of Rose Standish, over which a field of wheat was growing, an expedient adopted by the settlers so the Indians might not know how many of the colony had died.

It is said that John Alden had already noticed the youthful Priscilla Mullins in these early days of the settlement. The stage is now set with two of the principal characters outlined, so it is time for the entrance of Priscilla, the *Mayflower* of Plymouth, as she was fondly called by her contemporaries.

Priscilla Mullins was as fair and fragile as a snow drop blooming amid the snows of January. A sentimental interest has hovered around her memory because of the courtship of Miles Standish, which ended in her marrying another. This delicate Pilgrim is, too, described faithfully by William Bradford in his *Mayflower Chronicle*. "Mr. William Mullines," reads the passenger list, "and his wife and two children, Joseph and Priscilla, and a servant, Robert Carter." Older brothers and sisters of Priscilla and Joseph had been left behind in Leyden. They came not to the new land, but were cared for by friends there, and their record is lost. Priscilla at this time was only 16, just on the verge of womanhood. We can picture Priscilla not in the conventional uniform attire of the pictured Pilgrim, which with its gray gowns with dainty white collars and cuffs with stiff caps and dark capes is a mere artistic caper, according to the best authority. Women of Priscilla's station in life, and it was of the upper middle class, wore the English dress of the period. This was often full skirts of silk of varied colors; long pointed stomachers, often with bright tone; full, sometimes puffed or slashed, sleeves, and lace collars or "whisks" resting upon the shoulders. Often the gowns were plaited or silk laced; they often opened in front, showing petticoats that were quilted or embroid-

ered in brighter colors. Later came the dress restrictions, but not in the early days of the colony.

Fortune had severe trials in store for Priscilla Mullins. During that terrible first winter not only her father, but her mother and brother as well, died and she was left alone, orphaned and friendless in a strange new world. Her plight seems to have aroused the sympathy of the entire colony. The women adopted her *en masse*, and as her beauty was as evident as her goodness all the young men in the colony would have liked to have done the same thing.

Friends took Priscilla into their home, and there the first months of her mourning were passed. Perhaps the "dear gossips" of Plymouth colony planned for an early marriage for Priscilla as the best way out of her difficulties because there seems to have been a good deal of match-making activities in her vicinity.

Priscilla was trained at the domestic task of spinning, and probably was also one of the women "who went willingly into ye field and set corne." There was work for all to keep the little colony fed, shod and clothed from the meager facilities at hand. A crude ballad called "Our Forefathers' Song" described the general situation in Plymouth very aptly. It runs:

The place where we live is a wilderness wood,  
Where grass is much wanted that's fruitful and good;  
Our mountains and hills and our valleys below  
Are commonly covered with frost and with snow.

Our clothes we brought with us are apt to be torn,  
They need to be clouted soon after they are worn,  
But clouting our garments they hinder us nothing,  
Clouts double are warmer than single whole clothing.

If fresh meat be wanted to fill up our dish,  
We have carrots and turnips whenever we wish,  
And if we've a mind for a delicate dish,  
We go to the clam bank and there we catch fish.

For pottage and puddings and custards and pies,  
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies!  
We have pumpkin at morning and pumpkin at noon,  
If it was not for pumpkins we should be undone.

The first edge of his grief for Rose Standish gone, Captain Standish seems to have had his soldier fancy captivated by the girlish charms of Priscilla Mullins. She,



too, had her griefs, and it is possible that a common bond in their mourning drew them together in sympathy. She, too, was well born, for her father at his death was mentioned with regret as "a man pious and well deserving, endowed also with considerable outward estate; and had it been the will of God that he had survived, might have proved an useful instrument in his place." To his friend John Carver he committed his wife and children, but before his will had been probated the wife and son and the servant as well had joined him in death.

John Alden also had not been idle in discovering the charms of Priscilla Mullins. His stanch heart had been wrung by her grief, and often when the day's labors were over he would find his way with his friend Capt. Miles Standish to the residence of good John Carver and chat with the fair young visitor in the household.

This went on for some time. Finally one day Captain Standish confided to the thunderstruck John Alden that his desire had fallen upon Priscilla Mullins and that he wished to make her his second wife. He pointed out that Priscilla was an "orphan and alone and needed care and protection. "I am a maker of war and not a maker of phrases," said the bluff old soldier as he pleaded with Alden to go and present his cause to Priscilla.

Alden was reluctant, his heart with love of Priscilla overflowing, and feeling that this was more than even a friend should ask of another. Unsuspecting, Miles Standish urged him, however, and, reluctantly, most reluctantly, Alden went forth to win for another man what he would have given his eyes to have captured for himself.

The poet has pictured the scene as John Alden appeared to press the suit of another. Priscilla, as befitting to a Pilgrim, was seated beside her spinning wheel, the carded wool like a snow drift piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the spindle, singing, as she spun, the Hundredth Psalm. Priscilla greeted John with a smile. After some conversation the youth delivered his message. Tradition saith that Priscilla was dumfounded. She had been expecting a declaration from Alden, but never dreamed that it would be on behalf of another. Quickly she retorted, "Why does he not come himself?" Alden stumbled and said the captain was "busy." This infuriated Priscilla, and she said wrathfully that a woman's heart was certainly worth the asking.

Alden saw his blunder and tried to retrieve it by reciting Standish's glories, his good family, his military record, pressing his suit as ardently as if it were in very

truth his own. "Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England," he continued, "might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles Standish."

Priscilla looked up at him. Then a tender look dawned in her eyes, and, gazing at him directly, she queried, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" The revelation in her glance he could not mistake. Yet loyalty to his friend prevented him from taking advantage of his good fortune. Without another word, he turned and left her.

On returning to Miles Standish he recounted the conversation from beginning to end. The doughty captain, enraged that he had been flouted, took his friend to task and accused him of double dealing. The upshot of it all was that their long friendship was shattered in a single hour because of a woman. Masculine friendship that storms of adversity and long separation assail without result often flies to pieces when a woman comes between the friends. Poor John Alden did not dare be happy, and Priscilla, willful maiden, waited until he should come again, and elevated her pretty chin when she came across the mighty captain, now sullen when she met him at meeting or elsewhere.

At that moment, fortunately for Standish's wrath, he got the opportunity to vent it on the redskins. He organized his force of twelve valiant warriors and sallied forth to teach the Indian his place in the white man's scheme of things.

Meantime the *Mayflower* was returning to England. Alden, crushed, disappointed, not daring for loyalty to his angry friend to push his suit with Priscilla, planned to return to the old home, forsaking forever the Plymouth colony. He threw together his scanty belongings and went to the shore where the *Mayflower* waited, straining her anchors. A crowd had gathered there, and as Alden was about to step on the gunwale of the boat which would take him out to the waiting vessel he saw amid the solemn faces of the Pilgrims the tear-stained countenance of Priscilla Mullins.

Reproach, grief and unutterable longing were in her eyes. He gazed long into them across the distance between them, then jumped back on shore. "Here I remain," he vowed, raising his hand to heaven. So under the providence of God it happened that not one went back in the *Mayflower* and the colony was intact, save for the ravages made by death.

When a woman is as determined as was Priscilla to

wed the man of her choice, mere man hath little, indeed, to do with it. Thus it happened that before he knew it John Alden was safely betrothed to Priscilla and the wedding day was set.

Meantime what of Miles Standish? He had not been heard of for weeks, and many feared that he had fallen captive to the Indians or been killed with his little army by the savages. But not so Miles Standish. He was angry when he left Plymouth, but the excitement of the battle and his own good sense had reacted, and, soldier that he was, his heart had veered away from fickle woman-kind, and he was engrossed in the task at hand. Soon he returned to Plymouth, bringing with him as trophy the head of the brave Wattawamat, which later adorned the roof of the fort, a grim warning for many months. Priscilla, as she looked on the grewsome object, must have thanked God that her choice had fallen on John Alden and not the bloodthirsty soldier, Miles Standish.

Alden, meantime, was making ready the home for his bride. Finally, the blest day arrived and the Pilgrims were gathered in the meeting house for the wedding ceremony. Miles Standish had left town some weeks before on another Indian expedition. After the wedding sermon, according to the goodly custom of the day, had been heard, a form appeared on the threshold of the church, clad in armor. Behind him pressed his "invincible army," now reduced to eight. It was Capt. Miles Standish, returned from the wars to find the lady he loved the bride of another.

Dead silence fell over the church. Priscilla glanced archly at her erstwhile lover from the shelter of her husband's strong right arm. With one stride Standish came to their side. He put out his hand to the bridegroom and said "Let us be friends again." John Alden's face was aglow as he gladly grasped the hand of his old friend. Turning to Priscilla, Standish bowed low and said simply, "I should have remembered the adage, 'If you would be well served, you must serve yourself,' and moreover, no man can gather cherries in Kent at the season of Christmas." Priscilla laughed and flushed.

Then the wedding party adjourned to the roadway, where awaited Priscilla a unique wedding steed in the presence of Alden's snow-white steed, covered with a gay crimson cloth and with a cushion placed for a saddle. Priscilla mounted her steed and went with John Alden through the May-time lanes of old Plymouth to the home he had made for her.



It was not long, however, before John Alden and his reconciled friend went to Duxbury, Mass., and started a settlement there. The bruised heart of Miles Standish had been healed by the soft fingers of a certain Barbara, one of the passengers on the second coming of the *Mayflower*. She became the second Mrs. Miles Standish and in amity and affection the two families lived side by side in Duxbury. Priscilla became the mother of eleven children. Thus this Pilgrim romance, like a story book tale, ends aptly with the old phrase "And they lived happily ever after."

## CHAPTER 3

### George Washington and Martha Dandridge Custis

A STONE'S throw from old Bruton Church, Williamsburg, Va., where sleep the generations of Virginians that made history in colonial days, stands an old-fashioned mansion of white stone with ivy creeping over its ancient walls and with the tints of years thick upon it. The stately columns are crumbling now, but in the garden cluster roses, honeysuckle and hollyhock just as they did nearly two centuries ago when Col. George Washington came courting the buxom Martha Dandridge Custis. He whispered soft nothings in her willing ear under the shade of a giant mulberry that has maintained its fame as a trysting tree from that generation to this.

The lofty spirit of Washington, his unselfish devotion to his country and his genius in using power for the good of others, never for himself, have placed him among the world's great men. From that eminence his character has acquired a status of half god or mighty hero that, to the average person, makes him more than a mortal. In his exaltation, much of the human side of the man has been sacrificed to portray this god-like estate. Yet Washington was not only the divinely appointed leader of the infant colonies, destined to lead them on to victory and to greatness. He was, likewise, a fine type of the educated Virginia planter of his day and shared many of their distinctive characteristics of human virtues and failings as well.

So it comes with more or less surprise that, as a lover, Washington was ardent and that Martha Dandridge Custis was not his first love. The charms of other Virginia belles of the day enslaved his romantic heart again and again. In the after years, when his name had become world famous, many a gentle old lady in cap and lace ruff sighed gently, and mayhap regretfully, over some tender missive, packed away for years in lavender, that had been penned by the illustrious hand of George Washington. Why not? The social life of the Virginia planters and aristocrats was an Arcadia of merriment and innocent revelry. The Virginians knew how to enjoy life, and with Nature's bounty about them on every side in climate, fruits, flowers and game Virginia hospitality became proverbial and the latch string was always out for the unexpected guest. It was an unwritten law of the period that no guest ever left one of the rambling, comfortable old mansions, with their imported furniture, gleaming silver and sturdy and solid calf-bound books, after nightfall.

Life was a gay succession of house parties, fox hunts,

tournaments, fishing parties, while the winter season at Williamsburg, the capital city, mid-way between the York and James rivers, 7 miles northeast of Jamestown, was a round of debates and the official festivities of the governor's house and his aids, that would have made a current society editor historian mark the Williamsburg season as brilliant socially.

Into this atmosphere the young George Washington fitted by birth and breeding. He was the beloved half-brother of one of the wealthiest men in the colony, Lawrence Washington, of Mt. Vernon, well known by repute to be his heir, although in the fifties of the eighteenth century still a very young man, yet he had a brilliant military record of service under the ill-fated General Braddock in the French and Indian wars.

In addition, the future first President was the close friend and intimate of Lord Cecil Fairfax, the lord of uncounted acres in upper Virginia. And he was the son of Mistress Mary Ball Washington, of Fredericksburg and Rappahannock, a lady noted in those days for her generous heart, her business ability and the skill with which she raised her own son, George Washington, her five other children and several step-children. In every sense of the word he was an eligible, a "good catch," and many match-making mammas and willing damsels dreamed of bringing him to the declaration point.

Throughout his life Washington had a very tender spot in his heart for women. At sixteen he writes with all of youth's solemnity of a "Hurt of the heart uncurable." And from that time forward there is ever some "Faire Mayde" in the story of his life. As a matter of fact, Washington got along with women much better than he did with men; with men he was often diffident and awkward, ill concealing his uneasiness behind a forced dignity; but he knew that women admired him and with them he was at ease.

When he made that first western trip of his carrying a message to the French, he turned aside to call on the Indian princess, Aliguippa. She was vastly impressed by the tall, handsome young Virginian. He records quaintly in his journal that he presented her with a blanket and a bottle of rum, "which latter was thought the much best present of the two."

The story of his various courtships is written down in his expense account which he kept from boyhood with painstaking care. Such entries as "Treating the ladys, 2 shillings;" "Present for Polly, 5 shillings;" "My share

of the music at the dance, 3 shillings;" "Lost at loo, 5 shillings," prove that he was the average Virginian in these respects of his times.

One of the most serious romances before he met and fell in love at sight with the Widow Custis was with Mary Philipse, sister of Mrs. Beverly Robinson, a transplanted Virginian as it were, then residing in New York. She was older than Washington, a society belle. The attractive Washington, with his refreshing country manners, his tales of the frontier and military life made him a novelty in the Philipse drawing room.

She showered him with attentions, and his ardent young heart soon succumbed with the natural delight that a younger man feels in awakening the interest of an older woman. But Mary Philipse, while she admired and respected him, did not love him, and gently but unmissably turned him down. Two years afterward Mary Philipse married Col. Roger Morris, of the king's army. By this time, 1758, Washington had found the one love of his life in Martha Custis, and he could read Mrs. Morris' wedding cards with equanimity.

Washington always attributed his defeat at the hands of Mary Philipse to being too precipitate and "not waiting until ye ladye was in ye mood." The long arm of coincidence reached out again in after years, when the Washington who was commander in chief of the Continental army in 1776 occupied the mansion near New York of Colonel Morris, the colonel and his lady being fugitive Tories.

Before actually reciting the romance of Washington and Martha Custis, it is well to give a little of this *first* first lady of the land's history.

The colonial settlers of Virginia brought their prayer-book and their preachers with them. Among the flock of spiritual advisers was good Master Rev. Orlando Jones, a Welsh clergyman, whose descendants lived at Williamsburg, Va. There in May, 1732, in a plantation, was born Martha Dandridge, she who afterwards became the bride of George Washington. While surrounded by the simple luxuries of the time, it is doubtful that Martha Dandridge ever received more than the smattering and fashionable education of young ladies of that period, which was composed largely of social accomplishments, dancing, embroidery and the graceful and gentle arts of gentlewomen.

The blue stocking was as yet unknown and Martha Dandridge Custis Washington misspelled like a lady and

was never troubled at heart because she did so. Her instruction was given her at the hands of a governess, because girls never went to school in that era. Such general knowledge as she possessed of the world was gleaned from the few books she had read, and the society of her father's friends.

But her education in home-making was most thorough and complete. This home-making ability was later displayed in the excellence of the household management at Mount Vernon. In every sense of the word she was a home maker and could not only direct culinary pursuits but could concoct tasteful dishes that won her the crown of womanhood, the glory of being a good cook. Martha Dandridge was a belle of Williamsburg. She took part in the social happenings that centered around the governor's house there.

A description of this period shows her as "being rather below the middle size, but extremely well shaped, with an agreeable countenance, dark hazel eyes and hair, and those frank, engaging manners so captivating in American women. She was not a beauty, but gentle and winning in her nature, and eminently congenial to Washington. During their long and happy married life he ever wore her likeness on his heart."

When about 18, young Daniel Parke Custis, only son and heir of Col. John Custis, one of the king's councilors for Virginia, fell madly in love with her. Colonel Custis had other plans, however, for his talented son and desired an alliance with the beautiful and accomplished Evelyn, daughter of Col. William Byrd, of Westover. Colonel Custis was disappointed when young Daniel selected Martha Dandridge instead and even threatened disinheritance if his son persisted in making his own choice. But word kept coming to him of the grace and sweetness of Martha Dandridge and from every lip fell praises of her good sense and amiability. So finally the doughty old colonel surrendered and wrote on a piece of fair white paper, "I give my free consent to the union of my son with Miss Martha Dandridge."

The happy couple were soon afterward married, and the father of the bridegroom never ceased to rejoice in the good fortune of his son in marrying such a charming girl. They took up their abode at the White House on the bank of the Pamunkey river, in New Kent county, and were blessed with four children. In the summer of 1757, the husband died, leaving Martha at the age of 25, one of the wealthiest widows in Virginia, and with beauty unimpaired.

Besides the loss of her husband Martha Custis suffered a severe blow in the death of her eldest son, unusually endowed with mental gifts, and giving promise of a bright future.

The young widow administered her large estates in a capable manner. The trust her husband reposed in her was amply justified and her estates were among the best managed in the country. They seemed to occupy her entire attention, together with the care of her interesting children, and a second marriage, according to all accounts, was far from her thoughts. After a time she began to mingle again in Williamsburg society and, while greatly sought after, her heart appeared to be buried in Daniel Parke Custis' grave.

But she reckoned without George Washington and his persuasive powers.

It was a pleasant day in May, 1758, that a cavalcade consisting of a fine looking young military officer, dressed in the British scarlet accompanied by a dignified black body servant, also on horseback, crossed Williams ferry on the Pamunkey, not far from its junction with the York River. A Mr. Chamberlayne, a planter of the neighborhood, came up and greeted Col. George Washington, the officer, and invited him to stop at his plantation to rest and for dinner.

Colonel Washington declined and stated that he was hastening to Williamsburg to lay before the governor and council of Virginia matters relating to the march of the British and colonials against Fort Duquesne. Chamberlayne pressed his invitation, but Washington still declined. Finally the would-be host mentioned the fact that he had as guest in his family a charming Williamsburg widow, Mrs. Daniel Parke Custis, and that a few hours' conversation with her would recompense the officer for the necessity of riding later at night on account of the stopover.

Washington, ever alive to the charms of a pretty woman, yielded at last to Chamberlayne's entreaties.

Bishop, the body servant, was instructed to hold the horses ready for instant departure when the colonel had dined and completed his exchange of compliments. Bishop waited and waited and *waited* while the lengthening shadows enveloped the countryside, and still his master did not return.

Within the mansion the officer, now cavalier, was captive at the feet of Martha Custis. It was a case of love at first sight, and from that time no other woman ever had



the power to charm George Washington. A historic painting shows the patient Bishop waiting at the horse-block for his enslaved master. The sun sank below the horizon, and yet the colonel appeared not. The tired and hungry old servant wondered at his master's delay. It was not like him, for he was the most punctual of all men and was never a moment behind his appointments.

Mr. Chamberlayne finally noticed the patient waiter and, prevailing upon the officer to remain overnight, Bishop was sent orders to put up the horses.

The sun rode high in the heavens the ensuing day when the enamored soldier pressed with his spur his charger's sides and sped on his way to the seat of government. After dispatching his public business he retraced his steps and sought out the charming Widow Custis again.

There remains evidence that his courtship was immediately successful, for in Washington's cash account for May, 1758, there is an item, "One engagement ring, 2 pounds 16 shillings." Many a happy lover of the present day would be glad to escape so easily in his solitaire buying, but those were more simple days and the high cost of diamonds was not regarded as an essential part of wedded bliss as it is today.

As Daniel Parke Custis had been dead less than a year there was no immediate announcement of the engagement. But some eight months later the marriage was solemnized at the "White House," New Kent County. Strangely enough, Mrs. Washington, although the first "First Lady of the Land," never lived in the White House in the Capital City, but it was a coincidence that her home in Virginia was called the White House.

We find Mrs. Washington explaining to a friend that the reason for the somewhat hasty union was that her estate was getting into a bad way, and a man was needed to look after it. Her two children, John Parke and Martha Parke Custis, attended the ceremony. Martha Custis had every reason to be congratulated on her choice of a man. She owned 15,000 acres of land, many lots in the city of Williamsburg, 200 negroes and some money on bond; all the property being worth over \$100,000—a very large amount for those days.

The marriage ceremony was performed January 17, old style. The Rev. David Mossom, rector of the neighboring parish church of St. Peter's, was the officiating clergyman, and the planters, members of the Virginia assembly, and the belles and beaux attended the festivities incident thereto. We are told that the governor came

from Williamsburg in his coach and six, and many of the state officials were also present at the marriage. After the marriage the bride and her lady friends were borne to her home, the White House, in a carriage drawn by six horses, on which sat negro drivers dressed in uniform. The bridegroom, accompanied by other gentlemen on horseback, rode beside the coach on his fine charger.

At the close of the sessions of the House of Burgesses, to which he was a delegate from the district of Mount Vernon, he returned to that Potomac River home which he had inherited from his brother, Lawrence Washington, taking with him his bride and her two surviving children, John Parke and Martha Parke Custis. Then commenced that sweet domestic life at Mount Vernon, which always possessed a powerful charm for its illustrious owner. Writing to a kinsman in London, he indited these appreciative words of his new condition: "I am now, I believe, fixed in this seat with an agreeable partner for life, and I hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced in the wide and bustling world."

This ardent hope was fulfilled. For the woman he had chosen stayed by his side at Valley Forge during the dark days of the revolution and the glory of the Presidency and victory alike. Their married life was idyllic, and no shadow of disagreement or misunderstanding ever crossed their path or cast a shadow on the peaceful hills of Mount Vernon.

The only real shadow came in the untimely death of Washington's idolized stepdaughter, Martha Custis, a girl of rare beauty, who died in her sixteenth year—of consumption. Washington had loved her as his own child—fated as he was to be childless, so, as some one has appropriately said, "that he might be the Father of His Country."

This shadow passed into quiet resignation and in another year or so Mount Vernon resumed its old social life. Mrs. Washington shared with the general the love of society of friends; always dressed with a scrupulous regard for the requirements of her station and the fashions of the day and presided as mistress of Mount Vernon with great dignity and urbanity. The mansion was seldom without guests, who came to join Washington in the sports of the chase. In the years preceding the Revolution Mrs. Washington was much abroad with her husband and was frequently seen with him at the theaters and dancing assemblies at Annapolis, Williamsburg and Alexandria. She had at her disposal a chariot and four horses, with black postilions in livery for the use of herself and lady



visitors, and her equipage was frequently seen upon the road between Mount Vernon and Alexandria and adjacent estates.

With the Revolution came a change in the social conditions. Not only was Washington at the forefront of the American forces, but Mrs. Washington had her hands full during the seven years it lasted, widowed for these years except for the winters when she visited the camps of Washington and was an honored guest at the headquarters of the army. "Lady Washington, God bless her," was the toast at every convivial assemblage of the soldiers of every rank.

At length the desired end was in sight and the American troops, assisted by their gallant French allies, marched on Yorktown. With Gen. Washington went John Parke Custis, leaving his young wife, a scion of the noble family of Lord Baltimore, and their infant children under the sheltering roof of Mount Vernon.

Gathered around the great fireplace in the living room, Martha Washington and her daughter-in-law awaited news from the battle. When it came, borne by a panting courier, it was victory. But he also bore word of the severe illness of John Parke Custis, the beloved son and husband of the women. Mrs. Custis hastened to her husband's bedside, only to see him draw his last breath, and to meet at the same sacred post Gen. Washington, who had forsaken the feasts of victory to ride 30 miles to see poor John Parke Custis breathe his last.

On the sad return to Mount Vernon, Washington comforted his sorrowing wife with the promise that he would adopt the two younger children of John Parke Custis as his own. He remained true to this promise, and one of the children, Nelly Parke Custis, was his special pet.

After the peace of 1783 Mount Vernon became a point of great attraction, and many notables from all parts of the world went there. Hospitality was necessary on a liberal scale. Mrs. Washington preserved her sweet serenity. When her husband became the chief magistrate of the nation her simple habits remained unchanged, and her larger household was arranged upon the frugal model of her home at Mount Vernon. Both Mrs. Washington and he gave splendid examples of republican simplicity, and declined anything approaching royal honors. Her weekly receptions or soirées were dignified, yet with full consideration of the rank that imposed obligation.

But public life had few charms for Mrs. Washington.

She returned gladly with Washington to Mount Vernon after his terms of office were over, and always referred to the time when she was in public life as her "lost days."

The last years of Washington's life were passed quietly at Mount Vernon with his chosen companion. She was now nearly 70 years old, but the charm of the Williamsburg maid had never been lost. The shock of Washington's death came as a great blow to her. Her words at his death were prophetic: "'Tis well," she said. "All is now over. I shall soon follow him. I have no more trials to pass through."

In the Mount Vernon of today one is shown the attic bedroom facing the old tomb on the banks of the river and visible from the window into which Mrs. Washington moved after the death of the great American so she might at all times view his grave.

Her spirit seemed broken, and despite the endeavors of friends and relatives her grief could not be assuaged. The close companionship and affection of forty years was too precious to be forgotten or unregretted. Her only thoughts were with him in the tomb where he lay, and she prayed for the moment to come when she might join him again.

In a little more than two years this prayer was granted. She died of a lingering fever, her eyes fixed on the window of the little bedroom which looked down on the grave of the man she had so loved.

And the world as it pauses in reverent tribute beside the tomb of George and Martha Washington in historic Mount Vernon remembers the romance of this true love of the first American and his devoted, noble wife.

## CHAPTER 4

### Edgar Allan Poe and Helen Whitman

IN the longer of his poems, entitled "To Helen," Edgar Allan Poe wrote:

"I saw thee once—once only—years ago;  
I must not say how many—but not many.  
It was a July midnight; and from out  
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,  
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,  
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,  
With quietude, and sultriness and slumber,  
Upon the upturned faces of a thousand  
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,  
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tip-toe.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Clad all in white, upon a violet bank,  
I saw thee half reclining; while the moon  
Fell on the upturned faces of the roses,  
And on thine own, upturned—alas, in sorrow!

"Was it not Fate that on this July midnight—  
Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow)  
That bade me pause before that garden-gate,  
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?"

And the object of these inspired words was the woman, the "one woman" of his tempestuous life, whom he called "Helen, my Helen—the Helen of a thousand dreams."

The love story of Edgar Allan Poe and Helen Whitman, the New England poetess, years his senior, has seldom been equaled in the history of literature. All the pent-up romance of his poet nature was bestowed on this idyl of his dreams, and she, swept off her feet by the ardor of his attentions, by the wild frenzy of his wooing, never forgot him, and worshiped his memory to the end of her life. It stands forth, a classic in the world of romance. Mrs. Whitman, too, was a poet of no mean skill and, strangely enough, she is best remembered by the lines she wrote on a portrait of Poe which hung ever on her wall, hidden by a silken curtain from the sight of profane eyes.

The poem follows:

"After long years I raised the folds concealing  
 That face, magnetic as the morning's beam;  
 While slumbering memory thrilled at its revealing  
 Like Memnon waking from his marble dream.

"Again I saw the brow's translucent pallor,  
 The dark hair floating o'er it like a plume,  
 The sweet, imperious mouth, whose haughty valor  
 Defied all portents of impending doom."

It was no marvel that they should meet, and the lives of Poe and Mrs. Whitman found their climax in that meeting. Yet the poet Poe, ever a hunter for the mystic and the improbable, conceived a notion that there was a pre-ordained connection between their fates.

"I yielded once," he writes, "to an overwhelming sense of fatality. From that hour I have never driven from my soul the belief that my destiny, for good or for evil, either here or hereafter, is in some measure interwoven with your own."

Hope was reborn in the starved heart of Poe, writhing with the despair and grief that had followed the death the year before of his child wife, Virginia Clemm, to whom he was passionately devoted, but more with a brother's love than that which should exist between man and wife. The sweet but colorless child, Virginia Clemm, could not awaken in this poet heart the real ardor of love. She could only point the way to Helen Whitman, the one love of his life.

But in Helen Whitman was the fulfillment of all his dreams. She was the queen of his exquisite fancies about women, those delicate, rare visions of beautiful women, fairy creatures, that remain in lofty solitude on the peaks of literature, unsurpassed by any poet before or since. So he wrote her burning words, immortal love letters filled with the fancy of their divine kinship of soul; letters that breathe all the passion of the "Sonnets From the Portuguese;" letters that have rarely been equaled in the annals of love.

The pathetic life story of Poe is so well known it needs little repetition here. Less, at this distant date, is known of Mrs. Whitman, who was one of America's most gifted women poets in the middle of the nineteenth century. She was a native of Providence, R. I., where she was born on January 19 (Poe's birthday), in 1803; therefore six years his senior. Her family was one of comfortable circumstances, and she was rarely gifted as a poet herself,

accomplished in many literatures, imbued with the culture of France and Germany.

She married a Boston lawyer, John W. Whitman, in 1828, and was left a widow, with considerable means, in 1833. Her home in Providence was the scene of gatherings of the literati and almost assumed the proportions of a salon. Admirers in plenty besought her, but she preferred the freedom of her literary career to a remarriage.

Tradition says that she had long been an admirer of Poe's poetry and had followed his career with special interest largely because their inner natures were atune for the same racial characteristics, Celtic Norman lineage, warm romance blood, predestined to literary creation and sorrow, distinguished both. Indeed, in their veins ran the same kindred blood, for they both traced their descent from the ancient Celtic Norman stock, the Le Poers of Ireland, of which both Mrs. Whitman's maiden name, Power, and Poe were derivations.

Poe, on the other hand, was familiar with Mrs. Whitman's poems. In fact, their delicacy, spontaneity, appreciation of nature and mastery over rhythm, poems of rare sweetness and refinement, had caught his eye and soul and drew from him enthusiastic praise in a lecture on "The Female Poets of America," in which Poe's critical sense of justice did not falter in pointing out such defects as he discerned in the works of his fair compeers.

Yet they had not met. But Poe had seen her, for on a hurried visit to Boston to deliver a lecture at the Lyceum there he passed through Providence and caught a glimpse of a white figure wandering through a moonlit garden that the natives told him was that of Mrs. Whitman, the poetess. He had restlessly tossed in his hot hotel room, and near midnight arose and went for a moonlight stroll, when he saw the white apparition. His poetic fancy took fire, and the emotions aroused by the incident finally, years afterward, culminated in the beautiful poem "To Helen" with which this story begins.

Poe could not forget her, according to his own testimony; for he wrote to her after their formal acquaintanceship, retracing, as lovers are prone to do, the steps of their relationship, and claiming to have cherished her very name for years before they met.

In this letter he says:

"I have already told you that some few casual words spoken of you by —— were the first in which I had ever heard your name mentioned. She alluded to what she called 'your eccentricities' and hinted at your sorrows.

Her description of the former strangely arrested—her allusion to the latter enchained and riveted my attention.

"She had referred to thoughts, sentiments, traits, moods which I knew to be my own, but which, until that moment, I had believed to be my own solely—unshared by any human being. A profound sympathy took immediate possession of my soul. I can not better explain to you what I felt than by saying that your unknown heart seemed to pass into my bosom—there to dwell forever—while mine, I thought, was translated into your own.

"From that hour I loved you. Since that period I have never seen nor heard your name without a shiver, half of delight, half of anxiety. The impression left upon my mind was that you were still a wife, and it is only within the last few months that I have been undeceived in this respect.

"For this reason I shunned your presence and even the city in which you lived. I dared not speak of you—much less see you. For years your name never passed my lips, while my soul drank in, with a delirious thirst, all that was uttered in my presence respecting you.

"The merest whisper that concerned you awoke in me a shuddering sixth sense, vaguely compounded of fear, ecstatic happiness and a wild, inexplicable sentiment that resembled nothing so nearly as a consciousness of guilt."

Meantime, Mrs. Whitman does not seem to have been entirely immune from similar feelings. With the keenest interest she followed his career, touched to the depths of her womanly heart by the recital of his woes and his tragic life. Her admiration awoke to renewed heights at his publication of "The Raven," which swept the literary world with appreciation into acclaiming him the new poet of the time.

Mrs. Whitman was so carried away with the weird poem that she addressed an anonymous valentine to its writer. Naturally, she did not wish Poe to know that she was its author. But to his critical mind there was no mistaking style. He knew at once Mrs. Whitman was its author. Speaking of the occurrence to her afterward, he said: "Judge, then, with what wondering, unbelieving joy I received, in your well-known ms., the valentine which first gave me to see that you knew me to exist.

"The idea of what men call Fate lost then in my eyes its character of futility. I felt that nothing hereafter was to be doubted, and lost myself for many weeks in one continuous, delicious dream, where all was a vivid, yet indistinct, bliss. Immediately after reading the valentine



I wished to contrive some mode of acknowledging—without wounding you by seeming directly to acknowledge—my sense—oh, my keen—my exulting—my ecstatic sense of the honor you had conferred on me. To accomplish as I wished it, precisely what I wished, seemed impossible, however."

Finally the poet hit upon the plan of sending some of his own poems to Mrs. Whitman. To his great sorrow, no answer came, no single line of acknowledgment. Then he sent anonymously in mss. his lines "To Helen," the longer poem by that name. Still no answer. Writing her of the incident afterward, he divulged his purpose in the last venture. "There was yet another idea which impelled me to send you those lines; I said to myself the sentiment—the holy passion which glows in my bosom for her is of Heaven, heavenly, and has no taint of the earth. Thus, then, must lie in the recesses of her own pure bosom, at least, a germ of a reciprocal love; and if this be indeed so, she will need no earthly clew—she will instinctively feel who is her correspondent. In this case I may hope for some faint token, at least."

But the token did not come. The lady was obdurate. Her silence drove his passion to fever heat. The unattainable—ah, there was the keynote of his life story again. It was the very method that could best capture his wandering fancy. In despair, on the 10th of June, he wrote to a literary friend as follows:

"Do you know Mrs. Whitman? I feel deep interest in her poetry and character. I have never seen her—never but once. ———, however, told me many things about the romance of her character which singularly interested me and excited my curiosity. Her poetry is, beyond question, poetry—instinct with genius. Can you not tell me something about her—anything—everything you know—and keep my secret—that is to say, let no one know that I have asked you to do so? May I trust you? I can and will. Edgar A. Poe."

But love will have its way, and in the summer of 1858, armed with a letter of introduction from Marie McIntosh, the authoress, Poe called on Mrs. Whitman at her mother's home in Providence. The poetess consented to see him. Poe afterward wrote of the impression made on him by this first real sight of his love. "As you entered the room, pale, hesitating and evidently oppressed at heart; as your eyes rested for one brief moment upon mine, I felt, for the first time in my life, and tremblingly acknowledged, the existence of spiritual influences altogether out of the



reach of the reason. I saw that you were Helen—my Helen—the Helen of a thousand dreams. She whom the great Giver of all good had preordained to be mine—mine only—if not now, alas! then hereafter and forever in the heavens. You spoke falteringly and seemed scarcely conscious of what you said. I heard no words—only the soft voice more familiar to me than my own. Your hand rested within mine and my whole soul shook with a tremulous ecstasy; and then, but for the fear of grieving or wounding you, I would have fallen at your feet in as pure—in as real a worship as was ever offered to idol or to God.”

It is small wonder that many days did not elapse before these poetic natures were engaged. All seemed to be well, and Poe was enraptured. Happiness was in his clasp, at last, but alas, nearby was his tutelary spirit of evil with its melancholy plaint of “Never, never more.”

Friends busied themselves acquainting Mrs. Whitman with the vagabond life and nature of her poet. Serious old Horace Greeley wrote in his incomparable, illegible hand writing to a friend, asking “if Mrs. Whitman had no friend within your knowledge who can faithfully explain Poe to her.” Naturally, with such pressure on all sides, the path of their love was not smooth. Mrs. Whitman finally named the day, dependent upon Poe's keeping certain pledges of absolute sobriety she had extracted from him.

The unhappy man, his moral fiber relaxed by disease, the victim of hereditary predispositions, destitute of will and of self-control since the terrible years that preceded Virginia's death, broken in constitution and health from the awful vigil by her bedside, yielded to some unknown but irresistible pressure of evil, and broke his pledges.

Mrs. Whitman reluctantly yielded to the importunities of her friends, letters of renunciation passed between the two poets, and they never saw each other again. There was no scene, as some of Poe's defamers have declared; the relationship merely ceased, and they met no more.

This was early in 1849. Though they knew it not, Poe had only a few more months of life. After his death Mrs. Whitman was his constant and stanch defender, and she wrote a thin volume called “Edgar Allan Poe and His Critics,” which speaks of him in the highest praise and contradicted many wild rumors about his sad life.

This tragedy of the heart colored all the rest of Sarah Helen Whitman's life. It could not affect her appreciation of Poe's brilliant powers, but it cast a soft, half-veil-

ing shadow over her. She seemed different and apart from other women.

She lived to be 75 years of age, cherishing the memory of her lost poet to the last. She is represented as lying beautiful as a bride in death, her brown hair scarcely touched with gray. The poems she had written about Poe, beautifully bound in a little volume, were in her hand. A verse from one of them, "The Island of Dreams," seems appropriate with which to end this poets' romance:

"Where the clouds that now veil from us  
    heaven's fair light,  
Their soft, silver lining turn forth on the night;  
When time shall the vapors of falsehood dispel,  
He shall know if I loved him, but never how well."

## CHAPTER 5

### Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge

THERE is a rude log cabin in Larue, formerly Hardin County, in Kentucky, where, on February 12, 1809, amid abject poverty and with none of the trappings that greet the entry of princes of the world, was born a child whose spirit has wrought more lasting good than most men whom the world is content to call "great." This child was Abraham Lincoln—"Abe," he was affectionately called from boyhood to the dark hour of his assassination. And no better proof of the humanity of the man, of his universal appeal to all sorts and conditions of men, can be given than in the fact that he was generally so acclaimed.

The year 1809, an unusual one in American history, an "*annus mirabilis*," to quote our old friends the Latins. There are years that stand out in every century, set apart from their fellows, because of the rich gift of notable lives they bring to the world. And no greater gift came to the world in the nineteenth century than that on a bleak February day in 1809, in a Kentucky cabin, Abraham Lincoln opened his dark, mystic eyes to a life that was to be for him one of sorrow and travail but which was to bring happiness and hope to countless thousands and prove an inspiration to mankind so long as the scroll is kept of the great and good.

Some of his year mates are worthy of mention. Even, as from a Kentucky cabin in that year, came the lion-hearted Lincoln, from a country vicarage in the west of England came the sweet song bird Tennyson; and from another English home William Evarts Gladstone, a champion also of human liberties. Poland saw the birth of Chopin, the madman of music; the older Germany gave Mendelssohn to translate the music of he spheres for the ear of man, and America saw arise in the heavens of literature the poetic soul of Edgar Allan Poe. Others among the children contemporaries of Lincoln were Oliver Wendell Holmes, the brilliant New England scholar and poet, and a feminine star, noted for the frail beauty of its poesy—a star that will light the way for achieving womanhood until the end of time—the star of Elizabeth Barrett (Elizabeth Barrett Browning), who voiced the soul of woman in undying song.

Tradition saith that so shiftless was Thomas Lincoln, the father of Lincoln, that the log cabin had only three

sides and the fourth was open to all kinds of weather. It is very likely that the family was in the class, in a sense, of what is known in the South as "poor whites," poor not only as to worldly means but in the sense of character as well. But back of Thomas Lincoln were men of red blood and achievement; pioneers, men who had dared to stand forth in the perilous days of the Revolution and defy England's mighty king. The sturdy line might have run to seed somewhat under the devastating influence of Thomas Lincoln's laziness and general good for nothingness, but behind him were staunch souls such as Abraham Lincoln, his grandfather, the first settler in Kentucky, who came to that new frontier of civilization in 1780 and was killed by the Indians in 1784.

And back of the first Abraham Lincoln the racial line went to Puritan New England where Samuel Lincoln, the President's first American ancestor and son of Edward Lincoln, gent, of Hingham, Norfolk, England, had come to carve out his destiny in the new land beyond the seas. This was in 1637, and Sam Lincoln was apprentice to a weaver and settled with two older brothers in Hingham, Mass. His son and grandson were iron founders, a progression as the world counted it then from the state of apprentice weaver. The grandson Mordecai moved to Chester County, Pa., and from there his son John migrated to Augusta County (now Rockingham County), Va., and was the President's great-grandfather.

Such were the short and simple annals of his paternal American ancestors. They were not "great folk," as the term is usually understood; nay, they were of the plain people, those selfsame "plain people" Abraham Lincoln so greatly loved because there were so many of them. They sat not in the seats of the mighty, and very probably in Samuel Lincoln's wildest dreams after he set foot in the new land, adventurer and soldier of fortune though he was, never came a vision that a descendant of his should ever become the ruler of the country that was to be formed from the struggling little colonies of his day.

On Lincoln's mother's side of the house the story is even of a more humble and, in some respects, a darker design. Nancy Hanks, the mother, was a native of Virginia, but repute had it that she was the illegitimate daughter of one Lucy Hanks. Yet, despite the shadow of the bar sinister that clung to her name, she was considerably above Thomas Lincoln in social qualities and

station. Much of the mystery of Lincoln's life is revealed by this fact, because, as a rule, although there have been brilliant exceptions, most great men have great mothers. In fact, it seems as if it did not matter so very much what the fathers were so the mothers were consecrated to the task of making boys quit themselves like men.

Nancy Hanks saw beyond the boundaries of that hill-side farm "Rock Spring" in Kentucky. She knew the great world of achievement lay over the hills and far away, and she knew, too, that knowledge was the key that would unlock all doors for her beloved son. Out of her drab life with its sordid details, its soul-destroying poverty and the struggle for existence with the shiftless "Tom Lincoln," her soul leaped with desire and ambition for the lad who played at her feet. There are many mothers like this in the world. There were more, perhaps, in the old days before the lure of bridge and matinee called mothers so much from their natural cares. Rock Spring farm might bound the world for Tom Lincoln; it should be but the beginning of things for little Abe.

What the world owes to Nancy Hanks and her dreams for her son can never be paid to her. But wherever a man or woman in the name and memory of Nancy Hanks and her son Abraham helps a lad on his way to education and fortune, that man or woman is blessed beyond compare. For the fruits may be greater than could possibly be foretold. Investment in human lives can be profitable as well as useless, at times, when the ones invested in prove unworthy of the trust. While I was not consulted in the matter in any way, shape or form, and while I acknowledged the superb beauty of the Lincoln Memorial, with its majestic simplicity, so characteristic of the man it commemorates and stateliness of design, yet to my mind the most fitting memorial to Lincoln that could have been erected would have been the living memorial of a great school in the capital of the country, dedicated to the education of the youth of America in the ideals for which Lincoln stood.

The Lincolns had removed from Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Ky., to the Rock Spring farm shortly before the birth of Abraham. When little Abe was 4 years old they moved again, this time to a farm of 238 acres on Knob creek, about six miles from Hodgenville, Ky. But the restless spirit of Tom Lincoln was never satisfied in any one spot long. In 1816 they moved again, this time over the Ohio River, and settled on a quarter section near the present village of Gentryville, Spencer

County, Ind. They were miserably poor. Tired and worn out by the long fight against poverty, Nancy Hanks died on October 5, 1818. The boy, then seven years old, mourned her bitterly, and so did Tom Lincoln, for a time. But he found a measure of consolation in a renewal of ties with an old sweetheart, Mrs. Sarah Bush Johnston, whom he had courted years before, and married her in December, 1819. Her thrift greatly improved matters in the crude home, and she exerted a great influence over her stepson. Like his mother, she saw the coming glory of the lad and urged him to study and intellectual endeavor.

Spencer County was still a wilderness, and the boy grew up in pioneer surroundings, living in a rude log cabin, enduring many hardships and knowing only the primitive manners, conversations and ambitions of sparsely settled backwoods communities. Schools were rare and teachers qualified to teach only the merest rudiments of learning. For some time, the only books Abe possessed, either by direct ownership or by borrowing them from neighbors, were the Bible, a life of Washington and one of Henry Clay. His entire schooling, in five different schools, amounted to less than twelve months, but he became a good speller and an excellent penman. His own mother had taught him to read. In early boyhood he read and reread the Bible, Aesop, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress and a history of the United States. Burns and Shakespeare later became his favorite poets, and from them and the Bible he gathered that vast understanding of human nature which was one of his most enduring qualities of character.

Abe wrote rude, coarse satires, crude verse and compositions on the American government, temperance, etc. At the age of 17 he had attained the extraordinary height of 6 feet 4 inches, specially remarkable because of the length of his legs from the knees down which gave him his towering inches over other men. He was athletic in tendency and participated in all the wrestling matches, races, and lifting heavyweight bouts in the neighborhood and had gained a reputation as well of being a two-fisted fighter.

When 19 he made a journey to New Orleans on a flatboat as a hired hand.

Then came another removal on the part of the nomad father, this time to New Salem, Ill., where the youthful Lincoln became a clerk in the local store, studied law and soon won his way in his chosen profession to a degree



that he was chosen to represent the district in the state legislature.

His love-story opened in the sweet spring days of 1835, when the young legislator was returning from Vandalia, Ill., then the capital of the state. He rode on horseback from Springfield the last 20 miles of the journey. It was April, and the lanes and roads over which he traveled were lined with blossoming fruit trees. Spring was in the air, and it only lacked the woman to make the scene ideal for twenty and three.

We can picture the appearance he made, this man who was afterward to guide the destinies of America. Undoubtedly, he wore a suit of blue jeans, the trousers stuffed into the tops of cowhide boots; a hat of rabbit fur felt, with so long a nap that its fringe at times mingled in with his heavy black hair. Beneath the uncouth hat and the equally unruly hair was a broad, high forehead, luminous gray eyes of keen intelligence which the love of his fellowman had softened to gentleness and in which now and then flashed gleams of humor; a full, wide mouth with innate sweetness lingering around its corners. In the saddle bags was the remainder of his wardrobe, a most meager one even for those times, and his library of law books, and in his capacious pocket \$100 of his pay as legislator which he was carrying home to satisfy debtors. Thus he rode on to meet love, a love that had lingered in his heart for four long years since that April morning when Ann Rutledge had come down to cheer him as he was taking the flatboat to New Orleans safely over the New Salem dam.

Clad in her simple homespun with a blue sunbonnet, she had made a picture to linger in any man's memory. Her crown of hair was so pale a gold as to be almost flaxen. Her eyes a dark, violet blue with brown lashes, were tender in glance and her pink coloring showed the healthy out-of-door life she had led.

That night Abe Lincoln, the hero of the dam-shooting episode, had been feasted and toasted in the eight-room tavern of logs owned by James Rutledge, the father of Ann, whose glance across the waters had given him the power to perform the feat that men should talk of for years to come.

Ann waited on table at the homely meal, listened to Abe telling some of the stories that men remembered for long years afterward, and his kindly smile was very pleasing to her. She did not fall in love with him then. He was just an incident in her life, for she was betrothed



to another, one John McNeil, proprietor of the best store in the town and of rich farming lands. Ann Rutledge had good blood in her veins. She was descended from a family of South Carolina planters that boasted a signer of the Declaration, of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court under President Washington and a leader in an early Congress.

After Abe Lincoln returned from his trip to New Orleans he often met Ann Rutledge in the "spell downs" and simple entertainments of the farmer folk of the region. Lincoln was now boarding at the Rutledge tavern. He had risen rapidly in the public esteem and was fast friends with Ann, who was preparing for her wedding to McNeil. They studied grammar together out of a rare volume that Lincoln had borrowed. Ann made a pretty picture in the firelight and the candle light that sufficed for reading. In the evening she wore the natural cream white of flax and wool, wide cape, like collars of home-made lace, pinned with a cameo or painted brooch, and a high comb of tortoise shell behind the shining coil of her hair.

Is there any wonder that Lincoln soon found he had lost his heart to her? But he could not tell her of his love, for she was the promised wife of another. On the fly leaf of the grammar he wrote, "Ann Rutledge is now learning grammar." John McNeil did not fear Lincoln's friendship for his bride-to-be. He knew Abe was honorable, and he knew Ann's heart was all his and that she looked upon Abe as mentor and friend only.

But clouds grew across the sky of this idyllic existence. John McNeil suddenly sold his farms and other holdings in the spring of 1834 and left for his old home, indefinitely, "back East." The excuse he gave was that he wanted to bring his old father and mother out West to care for them. When he returned Ann and he were to be married.

The months slipped by after his departure. No letters came from him. Word was whispered around the neighborhood that Ann had been deserted. Lincoln heard the talk, and it hurt him greatly but not so much as the despair he saw growing in Ann's sweet eyes as the long days passed with no word from her absent lover.

Lincoln was the village postmaster, and he handled Ann's frequent letters to McNeil. Ann called daily to ask for a letter, but the kindly postmaster could only shake his head silently as she made her daily fruitless inquiry.

But, one day in midsummer, as Lincoln looked over

the mail there was a letter for Ann. He leaped on a horse and rode out to the Rutledge farm to give it to her. The happy color came into her cheeks as she saw it was from McNeil. Alone, she sped to the river bank. Lincoln looked after her as she went, knowing that the letter meant the death knell of the hopes he would not even acknowledge to himself. But fate had a dreadful blow in store for Ann Rutledge. McNeil wrote that he had deceived her, that his right name was McNamar, and he hinted vaguely at reasons why he could not return to her. She wrote pleading letters to him, and two more came in answer and then no more.

Soon it was noised around that Ann Rutledge had been deserted. Her father broke in health under the blight, and the chivalric Lincoln threw himself into the breach. A new element was added to the absorbing drama when Lincoln began to pay open court to Ann, publishing far and wide that he would be proud to win what McNamar had not cared to keep.

At first Ann was impervious to her new lover's attentions. She was too bruised and too hurt. Little by little Lincoln drew her from her sad thoughts, then they began to study again, and when he was elected to the legislature in August Ann saw that this was a man, indeed, and her fancy turned to him.

In December Lincoln rode away for his winter of law-making at Vandalia. Now letters came with faithful regularity for Ann. They drew pictures of an ambitious future, they told eloquently of affairs at the state capitol, and it is small wonder that Ann enjoyed them and answered in pathetic little epistles. So, on the spring day in 1835, as Lincoln rode homeward his mind dwelt on her with a tenderness no longer forbidden, no longer hopeless of its reward.

They spent a happy summer together, reading Shakespeare and Burns. He pictured to her a life together that would have no dark shadows of an unforgotten love. They could not be married until he was admitted to the bar, so she took up her old plan of going to the Jacksonville academy, so she might be trained to occupy her proper place by his side. Yet across Ann's new happiness crept a shadow. Suppose McNamar should come back and she found she still loved him? The doubt, the hope and fear of him made her fade visibly before her fond lover's eyes. He was at a loss to understand it.

The thought tortured her, maddened her so that she slipped into the delirium of brain fever, and when Lincoln

returned from a business trip in the county he found her in its throes.

She was only conscious again for an hour, which Lincoln spent with her. What passed between them in that hour of parting no one else ever knew. But the look of sorrow that was in his eyes until his death came there in that hour, and he stumbled out of that death chamber like a soul gone blind and groping. Two days later, Ann Rutledge died.

It was months before Lincoln could rally from the blow and the shock. He spent hours at her grave, his mind was darkened for a time, and he passed days in a brooding melancholy that his friends feared would end in a suicidal mania.

When the winter came, one night amid the blasts of a tempestuous storm he arose, went to the door and looked out into the wild night. Suddenly he cried out in utter desolation:

"I cannot bear to think of her out there alone, in the cold and darkness and storm." The tears came, the ice of his frozen heart was unlocked at last and his reason saved. Frequently he said, "My heart is buried in the grave with that dear girl."

In 1909, Lincoln's centennial year, a slender shaft of Carrara marble was placed over Ann Rutledge's grave in Oakland cemetery, Petersburg, Ill.

"Flow gently, sweet Sangamon, disturb not her dream."

But even such grief as Lincoln experienced at the death of Ann Rutledge comes in time to be assuaged. Youth will be served and we are but mortal, even the Lincolns among us, and within a few years Lincoln found another romance budding in his heart.

It was for vivacious Mary Todd, a Kentucky girl of good family and social standing both in Illinois and Kentucky. Ann Rutledge became only a sweet memory. And Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln were married in 1842. Four sons were born to the Lincolns, of whom the only one to grow up was the eldest, Robert Todd Lincoln, who now resides on U Street in Georgetown.

## CHAPTER 6

### Robert Edward Lee and Mary Parke Custis

THE death recently of Col. Robert E. Lee, only surviving grandson of Gen. Robert E. Lee, the great Southern leader, recalls the idyll of Arlington, one of the most memorable romances in American history.

Like his great contemporary and generous enemy, General Grant, Lee was not only brave but gallant at heart. As a poet once so strikingly said:

"The bravest are the tenderest.  
The loving are the daring."

To be truly loved by any man is the enduring crown of womanhood, but to be the darling of a hero and world leader is a lot that falls to comparatively few women.

The thousands of Americans and foreigners who yearly with reverent tread and bared heads visit the sacred aisles of Arlington, where sleep the nation's dead, know all too little of the history connected with that consecrated ground and nothing of the romance that clusters about its dells and graceful century-old trees.

Nor do many know that a quaint home on Washington street in venerable Alexandria was the boyhood home of Robert E. Lee and the scene of the beginnings of his romantic love story.

The colonial pillars are shelter for the climbing honeysuckle and white roses that are descended from the flowers that poured their fragrance forth for the dark-eyed little boy—later to be the world-renowned leader of a "lost cause"—who then called that hallowed spot "home."

Robert E. Lee still lives in history and the hearts of the American people, although his mortal remains rest under the benediction of adoring youth in the quiet chapel of Lexington. Mary Parke Custis Lee, the belle of Arlington—his first sweetheart and his last, too—has gone the way of all flesh. The banner he loved and for which he fought is furled, albeit its veteran soldiers kiss its tattered folds as they march by in feeble ranks to death.

The picture is set; the actors are about to pass over the silver screen of memory. Here's a toast to the gallant son of "Light Horse Harry" Lee and his fair lady.

The first scene in the romance is a prologue, as it were.

To understand the character of Lee, or of any man, for that matter, one must have some conception of his ancestors, of his family traditions and the inheritance of intellect, talent, culture and virtue that should rightfully be his.

When Charles I was seated on his unsteady throne that was to prove a short step to the scaffold, a certain Col. Richard Lee—a Shropshire Lee, of Moreton Regis—was one of his good gentlemen and soldiers. When age crept upon him Colonel Lee secured from his complaisant monarch a patent to vast acres of land in the virgin country beyond the seas.

Bidding farewell to his native land, Colonel Lee, with staunch heart, set forth on his new venture. His land was situated in what is now Westmoreland County, Va. It was unbroken wilderness in that year of grace, and the red peril lingered ever at the door of the white settler, were he king's man or pioneer. The colonel cleared river land on the banks of the Potomac and built himself a spacious, colonial mansion which he named "Stratford," in grateful memory of a family home in the old country.

To the last hour of his life Colonel Lee was a Stuart adherent. In his will he completely ignored the protectorate in dating it as follows:

"The 6th of February, in the sixteenth year of the reign of our sovereign lord, Charles II, King of Great Britain." At that time the second Charles had been on the throne but three short years.

With Governor Berkeley he assisted in keeping the colony loyal to the crown. The second son of the doughty old colonel and Jacobite Richard had five sons. It is from Richard Lee that the family of Robert Edward was descended.

Dashing "Light Horse Harry" Lee, one of the popular heroes of the Revolution, was a law student at Princeton when the storm of war broke over his beloved country. Down went his Blackstone, and the 19-year-old lad buckled on old Colonel Lee's sword and answered "Here am I" to the bugle that shrilled high, calling those early sons of America to arms.

Before many months Henry Lee, the law student, was "Light Horse Harry" Lee, the cavalry captain. Boys became men overnight in those fate-filled days, and before Lee was 25 years old his gallantry and military sagacity were rewarded.

General Washington was devoted to "Light Horse Harry" Lee. He admired his dauntless courage, and

there is a legend that his feelings for the dashing young cavalryman was the more enhanced because Washington had once entertained tender sentiment for the beautiful Lucy Grymes, afterward Lee's mother.

The Revolution won, "Light Horse Harry" Lee retired to Stratford and the quiet of a Virginia country gentleman. After the death of his first wife, Matilda, and his two infant sons, "Light Horse Harry" Lee was grief-stricken for a number of years. Then he met Annie Hill Carter, daughter of Shirley Carter, a belle of the day. New romance budded in his heart. They were married and happiness again reigned at Stratford, especially when a succession of four sturdy sons and two buxom daughters made the roof tree of the old mansion fairly ring with childish laughter. There was born on January 19, 1807, Robert Edward Lee, the third son. Little Robert was rather delicate when a lad, although he grew more robust in after years and quite an athlete. The chivalric nature of the boy was stimulated by the environs of this stately Virginia home. Around him were old portraits, old plate and old furniture, telling plainly of the ancient origin and high position of his family. In the quaint mahogany secretary were parchment family trees, histories and time-mellowed land deeds. Gray old servants lulled him to sleep with stirring recitals of his people. All was calculated to impress on his mind the lofty doctrine of "noblesse oblige," an obligation to which Robert Edward Lee remained true all his days.

He never forgot Stratford, and often in later years described in glowing terms the beautiful old mansion, built in the form of the letter "H". Some idea of its massive proportions can be gained from the fact that its walls were several feet in thickness. In its center was a large salon. Surmounting each wing was a pavilion with balustrades, above which rose clusters of chimneys. The front door was reached by a broad flight of steps; the grounds handsome and alive with bright foliage of oaks, cedars and maple trees and the ghostly Lombardy poplar.

The best testimony of Robert's boyhood was given by his father, who wrote, "Robert was always good." This witness is further attested by the fact that when he went to West Point he never received a demerit. And, as every army officer will testify, to receive demerits at West Point is one of the easiest things in the world to accomplish.

When Robert was 4 years old a change came in the fortunes of his family. A stately house was left to "Light



Horse Harry" Lee in Alexandria, the big town of the Potomac waterside. Because of the better facilities for education of his children, "Light Horse Harry" Lee left beautiful Stratford and went to live in Alexandria.

It was not long after their removal to the quaint little town that 6-year-old Robert Lee first met Mary Parke Custis, then a toddling 4-year-old, who was afterward to be his wife.

One day after the Lees had become settled in their new home a stately coach and four from Arlington Manor House drove up the long driveway. Within were Mistress George Washington Parke Custis, wife of the adopted son of General Washington, and tiny baby Mary. While the ladies exchanged the courtesies of the season little Robert and even smaller Mary sat demurely on the veranda steps, also getting acquainted.

Suddenly a scream arose from the veranda. "Bad boy!" shrieked Mary, stamping her tiny foot. Both mothers rushed out. The boy was sitting quietly, watching the child's temper.

"Whatever is the matter, dear?" said Mrs. Custis.

"Bad boy teased me," replied the angry child.

Mrs. Lee turned to Robert. "I stopped her pulling the cat's tail," said the lad quietly. "It hurt Pussy."

The ladies laughed, and little Mary was finally persuaded to smile again by a visit to Robert's pet pony.

It might be well to digress just here, inasmuch as the party of the second part of this romance has now been introduced to the gentle public.

It will be remembered when George Washington courted and won the dashing widow Custis and bore off in triumph his bride to Mount Vernon that the buxom Mistress Custis possessed two young children, Martha and John Parke Custis. These step-children were the apple of General Washington's eye, and he personally superintended their education, lavishing on them all the love that he would have given to children of his own. Young John Parke Custis acquitted himself with credit, was a member of the Virginia legislature and on Washington's staff during the revolutionary war. He married and had four young children. All was going well with the little family when the young father was stricken ill and sent home by General Washington to Mount Vernon to be nursed back to health. The day of the surrender of Yorktown dawned, the British humbled their proud flag in the dust, Washington was surrounded by his victorious generals, their idol, when through the ranks broke a courier.



He bore a message that John Parke Custis had died on that day of victory. Poor Martha Washington! Her only daughter had died several years before, and the doubly bereaved mother now awaited the homecoming of her husband. Putting aside all thoughts of rejoicing, Washington giving the fruits of victory into the hands of his generals, set out that night to gallop by night and day over the rough country roads until he could reach the side of his sorrowing wife.

As a consolation to Mrs. Washington in her bereavement, he adopted the two youngest children of the deceased, a boy, George Washington Parke Custis, and a girl, who thenceforth formed a part of his immediate family.

Sunshine came again into Mount Vernon with these innocent children. When little George Washington Parke Custis grew to manhood he inherited the magnificent estate of Arlington Manor, also on the Potomac, a few miles above Mount Vernon. He married, and his little daughter Mary is the child who was the boyhood and manhood sweetheart of Robert Edward Lee.

To return to the children seated on the Lees' front veranda. That was their first meeting, but not their last. They grew up side by side, sharing their games and sports and children's parties together. Always it was Mary Custis who chose "Bob Lee" in "postoffice" and other kissing games. The parents of both smiled indulgently. After all, an alliance between these historic houses would be most proper and fitting and it would join in addition two great estates.

A great grief befell Robert E. Lee when he was but 7 years old. His gallant father, "Light Horse Harry" Lee, the Revolutionary hero and patriot, became a helpless invalid. He was sent to the West Indies to recuperate. There he lived for five years separated from his loving family. In 1818 he found, to put it in his own words, "that he was approaching the Valley of the Shadow," and his one desire was to end his days at home. So he set sail in a little coasting vessel, but the pitching and tossing of the ship so aggravated his malady that he was obliged to make port at Cumberland Island, off the coast of Georgia. His former friend and commander, Gen. Nathaniel Green, had an estate there, and his married daughter, Mrs. James Shaw, was residing in its beautiful mansion. General Lee was taken off the boat in a dying condition. Every care and comfort and attention was bestowed upon him, but in vain. He was buried

close to the grave of General Greene, and Robert E. Lee was a fatherless lad of eleven.

Such griefs mature boys quickly, and young Robert felt that he must protect and care for his mother. His beautiful nature flowered into manly consideration for the stricken widow, and he honored his father by caring for his father's wife. Life, with all its problems, grew serious overnight, and he besought his mother to place him in the hands of a tutor so he might the more quickly prepare for his career at West Point and follow his father's profession of soldier.

His mother yielded to his wishes and placed him under the tutelage of a Mr. Leary, a gentleman of scholarly attainments. His spiritual adviser who taught him the catechism was young William Meade, afterwards Bishop of Virginia, historian of the old Dominion. When Bishop Meade, years later, at the time of the Civil War, was about to die he sent for his former pupil and said: "God bless you, Robert—I cannot call you 'general'—I heard your catechism too often."

Mr. Leary did his work well, and when Robert Lee reached 18 the longed-for appointment to West Point came. Robert was thrilled and his first act was to ride over to Arlington Manor house and tell Molly Custis the good news. That very night they became engaged, and young Robert went off to the academy determined to make his mark for the sake not only of his mother but the sweet faced Virginia girl who awaited his return.

There has never been a better cadet, one more filled with the traditions of West Point and all for which they stand, than Robert Edward Lee. And there have been few men there who so won both the affection and respect of his fellow cadets, and of his superior officers as well, because he never earned a single demerit, as said before, and was graduated second in his class. The military science was his absorbing study, and much of the genius he afterwards displayed as the gallant chieftain of a lost cause was developed at West Point.

On graduation Lee was made a second lieutenant of engineers and sent to assist in completing the extensive fortifications planned at Hampton Roads for the defense of the Chesapeake in case of attack. It was the very irony of fate that this knowledge was afterward used by Lee to good effect in the war between the states.

Mary Custis waited patiently at home. The time was drawing near when they were to be married and the hope chest was filled almost to overflowing. The great day

came, June 30, 1831, when Lieut. Robert E. Lee was to wed the sweetheart of his boyhood and his young manhood, Mary Parke Custis. A nephew of General Lee, Fitzhugh Lee, has described the marriage scene at Arlington. He writes:

"Old Arlington was in all her glory that night. The stately mansion never held a happier assemblage. Its broad portico and widespread wings held out open arms, as it were, to welcome the coming guests. Its simple Doric columns graced domestic comfort with a classic air. Its halls and chambers were adorned with portraits of the patriots and heroes and with illustrations and relics of the great revolution and of the 'Father of His Country,' and, without and within, history and tradition seemed to breathe their legends upon a canvas as soft as a dream of peace."

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Mr. Keith, and it is not hard to imagine the picture of the beautiful young bride and the handsome, stalwart young officer of the engineers standing there as they plighted their troth.

After a short honeymoon Lee returned to his work on the harbor defenses. Later came a Washington appointment, and he rose steadily in his profession, giving good service in the Indian skirmishes and in the Mexican War as well.

During the Mexican War Lee wrote steadily to his wife and the two little sons who had come to make his home the happier. It was their first separation at Christmas. He writes: "We have had many Christmases together. It is the first time we have been entirely separated at this holy time since our marriage. I hope it does not interfere with your happiness, surrounded as you are by father, mother, children and dear friends. I therefore trust you are happy and that this is the last time I shall be absent from you during my life. May God bless you till then and forever after is my constant prayer."

The children born to Robert E. Lee and his wife were: George Washington Custis Lee, W. H. F. Lee and Robert E. Lee, Jr., and four daughters, one of whom, Miss Mary Custis Lee, lived until a few years ago.

Of Lee in the civil war and in the trying days of reconstruction history has written so fully that more here would be merely superfluous. The gentle Mary Custis was now a confirmed invalid, and he watched over her with the care of a mother. Their romance survived defeat, disillusionment, and together they drank the bitter

cup of disappointment and found it sweet because they were together.

But October 14, 1870, was to see their mortal parting, for on that day, when the whole South stood with bared heads, Robert E. Lee passed on at the behest of the great Commander-in-Chief of Humanity to whose dictates there is no manner of gainsaying. Mrs. Lee did not long survive him, faithful and true to the last to this Chevalier Bayard of a Lost Cause.















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